

Mayfield Community School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour



Mission Statement

Together We Learn, Together We Care, Together We Respect

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (welfare) Act 2000 and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the board of Management of Mayfield Community School has adopted the following Policy to prevent and address bullying behavior in conjunction with and within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024. This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*.

The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a *Bí Cineálta* policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

➤ Targeted behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

➤ Repeated behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

➤ Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

➤ Types of bullying:

- Disablist Bullying - behaviour or language that is intending to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need.
- Exceptionally Able Bullying - behaviour or language that is intending to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents.
- Gender Identity Bullying - behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity.
- Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) Bullying - behaviour or language that is intending to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Physical Appearance Bullying - behaviour or language that is intending to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who "look different" can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body.
- Racist Bullying - behaviour or language that is intending to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined by the *National Action Plan Against Racism* as "a form of domination which manifests through power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin."
- Poverty Bullying - behaviour or language that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources.
- Religious Identity Bullying - behaviour or language that is intending to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity.
- Sexist Bullying - behaviour or language that is intending to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex.
- Sexual Harassment - any form of unwanted verbal, non verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	26 Februray 2025	Department Surveys: Google Form – collected responses.
Students	26 February 2025	Department Surveys: Google Form – collected responses
Parents	26 February 2025	Department Surveys: Google Forms – collected responses via school social media platforms and text messages to parents with survey links.
Board of Management	03 April 2025	Survey given to BoM by principal. This was a Google Form, time allocated to complete the survey during meeting.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	18 March 2025	Community Survey – printed and given to community that works with our school. Example: Sports Complex Example: Newbury House Physical copies of surveys were collected.
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Culture and Environment

Positive and inclusive school culture
Student Support Team
Positive relationships
Effective leadership
Positive culture and environment
A telling environment
Seating plans
A trusted adult
Safe physical spaces
Supervision
Wellbeing Week
Amber Flag
Empowerment of student voice – student council
Designated lunchtime areas for each year group
October Angels

Curriculum

Teaching and learning in SPHE
RSE Curriculum
Student Participation
SPHE Methodologies
Promoting Inclusion and Diversity
Extra Curricular Activities
Group Work/Collaboration
Team Teaching
Staff CPD Bi Cinealta

Policy and Planning

Bí Cineálta policy
Student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy
Code of Behaviour
Child Safeguarding
Acceptable Use policy
Supervision
RSE policy
SEN/Inclusion policy
SSE Policy
Staff CPD

Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections

Bullying awareness initiatives

Student and parent participation

Teacher Professional Learning

Critical Thinking Skills

Promoting peer support

Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience

Check and Connect

HSCL

Newbury House

Library

Sports Complex

NEPS

CAHMS

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

1. Culture and Environment
 - Positive and inclusive school culture and environment.
2. A Trusted Adult
 - Students are repeatedly reminded of adults they can trust and speak to if they are experiencing bullying behaviour. This is encouraged during SPHE lessons and visual reminders of staff they can speak to are displayed in the school.
3. Physical Safe Space
 - Mayfield Community School ensures measures are taken to create safe physical spaces for students.
 - Good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces.
 - Visual barriers from windows such as posters are removed.
 - Mirrors are installed to improve visibility and avoid blind spots.
 - Improved visibility of staff supervision at break times.
 - Murals, artwork and signage in our school promotes equality, diversity, inclusion, wellbeing and respect.
4. Curriculum and Learning
 - SPHE and RSE classes aim to empower students to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others.
5. Policy and Planning
 - Wellbeing of school community is at the heart of all policies and plans.
 - Student Friendly Bi Cinealta Policy is displayed in school journals and on the walls of the school.
 - Acceptable use policy, supervision policy, and Code of Behaviour in place to support student wellbeing.
6. Relationships and Partnerships
 - Interpersonal connections supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as student council, school clubs, parents' association, student support teams.
 - Positive relationships promoted through initiatives such as wellbeing week and amber flag.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

- Yearhead for each year group assisted by principal and deputy principal

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- > seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- > conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- > consider the age and ability of those involved
- > listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- > take action in a timely manner
- > inform parents of those involved

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

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